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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9426

INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1484

RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 1580

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

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NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/GAVITO/HARDING

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/17/2017

TAGS: PGOV PREL PTER PARM SY IS LE

SUBJECT: LEBANON: READY TO MAKE FIRST CONTRIBUTION TO THE SPECIAL TRIBUNAL, BUT LACKS ACCOUNT INFORMATION

REF: STATE 129919

Classified By: DCM William Grant for Reasons: Section 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 4.

¶2. (C) Finance Minister Azour told the Ambassador on September 12 that, in addition to the \$5 million the GOL plans to commit later this month to the account for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, taken from GOL contingency accounts, he has added a "program law" into the draft 2008 budget law that allows the GOL to commit in 2008 to a three-year contribution. The money would be disbursed annually. Azour had not been given any information about the cost to Lebanon of the tribunal, but believed he could find enough money to cover Lebanon's promise to fund 49 percent of the estimated \$120 million cost for the first three years. He also felt confident he could deliver more money in the first two years, front-loading Lebanon's contribution per the UN's requirements.

¶3. (C) PM Siniora told the Ambassador during a September 15 meeting that, following up on our request that Lebanon make the first contribution, he had spoken with the UN SYG about transferring Lebanese funding into an account established by the UN for the Special Tribunal. Siniora was under the impression that the account was still not open. (Note: Siniora is aware of the US need to obligate its contribution before the end of the US fiscal year and, as a result, the need for Lebanon to make its contribution before that. End note.)

¶4. (U) Action Request. Post recommends that Department ensure the UN Secretariat provides Special Tribunal account information to the Lebanese authorities ASAP so that the GOL can make its payment.

FELTMAN